

March 17, 2025

Testimony in opposition to LD 486

An Act to Remove the Duty of an Individual Exercising Self-defense to Safely Retreat or Abstain from Performing Certain Acts upon Demand

Dear Chair Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

My name is Lynn Ellis and I live in Brunswick. As I have stated in past testimony over the last 6 years I am concerned with the surge in gun violence locally and across the country. The ongoing trauma to our psyche is real and problematic. There is evidence now that reports increased access to firearms continues to impact the number of homicides and suicides. A Brookings Institution study supports that observation, noting, “When Americans are concerned about their personal security, they buy firearms.” With the level of angst over federal policy and changes impacting our very lives, gun violence continues to escalate and it is understandable for some to seek ways to feel more secure. However, I don’t believe having more firearms accessible, is supporting this narrative.

Rand Gun Policy Analysis states “Alternatively, by lowering the legal risks of using deadly force, these laws could encourage the escalation of aggressive encounters, resulting in an overall increase in firearm homicides or injuries. Furthermore, the greater likelihood of facing a citizen willing to use a firearm defensively under these policies could induce criminals to carry firearms more often and thus increase the share of violent or property crimes involving firearms.”

Stand your ground laws may also embolden individuals, often with a history of violence, to escalate conflicts and use deadly force. Laws like LD486 allow individuals to provoke a fight and then justify the killing of the person or persons they provoked.

Over the many years that I have been an advocate of commonsense gun safety laws, I have heard repeated messaging from testifiers insisting on more equity in their rights to own guns. I am concerned that this growing trend of using a firearm to settle differences among family and friends, as we have seen in recent months, is creating a norm that it is the “best” way to protect oneself. Innocent lives are being lost in greater number with this belief. It is an act of incredible ethical irresponsibility to allow things to continue as they are today.

LD 486 must not pass.

<https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/stand-your-ground/violent-crime.html>

<https://rockinst.org/blog/more-guns-more-death-the-fundamental-fact-that-supports-a-comprehensive-approach-to-reducing-gun-violence-in-america/>

